

**CITY OF SEATTLE
DETERMINATION OF NON-SIGNIFICANCE BY
THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

Applicant Name: The Department of Planning and Development

Address of Proposal: North Beacon Hill Urban Village

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

This proposal is to adopt rezones and expand the Station Area Overlay District within the North Beacon Hill Residential Urban Village. The proposal includes changing existing SF 5000 and LR2 zoning to LR3, increasing the height limits of the existing NC2-40 and NC2P-40 zones to NC2-65 and NC2P-65, and changing existing SF 5000 zoning to LR3 and NC2-65. All of these proposed rezones are located either within or adjacent to the existing Beacon Hill Station Area Overlay District.

The proposal will also expand the Station Area Overlay District boundary to include several sites outside the current Station Area Overlay District that are now designated as Multifamily and Mixed Use/Commercial on the City's Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map.

The following approval is required:

SEPA - Environmental Conditions - Chapter 25.05, Seattle Municipal Code.

SEPA DETERMINATION: ☐ Exempt ☒ DNS ☐ MDNS ☐ EIS

 ☐ DNS with conditions

 ☐ DNS involving non-exempt grading, or demolition,
 or involving another agency with jurisdiction.

BACKGROUND DATA

Background

The proposed rezones are located within the North Beacon Hill Residential Urban Village. The Department of Planning and Development has worked with members of the North Beacon Hill community to identify a preferred development direction for this area. The proposal and code amendments are based on the general guidance provided in the 2010 North Beacon Hill Neighborhood Plan Update, the 2011 North Beacon Hill Town Center Urban Design Framework and dialogue with North Beacon Hill community members.

Proposal Description

This proposal is to rezone parcels in the North Beacon Hill Residential Urban Village and expand the Station Area Overlay District. The rezone area is approximately 12 acres in size and the area of the Station Area Overlay District expansion is approximately 6 acres in size.

The rezones are anticipated to result in a 20 year growth projection of 213 additional households and 20 additional jobs.

Proposed rezones are as follows:

Area A: Rezone the existing Single Family (SF 5000) zone to Lowrise (LR3)

Area B: Rezone the existing Lowrise (LR2) zone to Lowrise (LR3)

Area C: Increase the height limits of the existing Neighborhood Commercial (NC2-40) zone to Neighborhood Commercial (NC2-65) and Neighborhood Commercial with Pedestrian Zone (NC2P-40) along Beacon Avenue S to Neighborhood Commercial with Pedestrian Zone (NC2P-65)

Area D: Rezone the existing Single Family (SF 5000) zone to Lowrise (LR3)

Area E: Rezone the existing Single Family (SF 5000) zone to Neighborhood Commercial (NC2-65)

The proposal will also expand the Station Area Overlay District to include several areas outside the current Station Area Overlay District that are now designated as Multifamily and Mixed Use/Commercial on the Comprehensive Plan's Future Land Use Map.

Public Comments

Proposed changes to the Land Use Code require City Council approval. Public comment will be taken on the proposed amendments at a future scheduled Council public hearing.

ANALYSIS - SEPA

The initial disclosure of the potential impacts from this project was made in the environmental checklist dated September, 2011. The information in the checklist, the information and analysis in the Director's Report and Recommendation, the 2011 North Beacon Hill Town Center Urban Design Framework, a copy of the proposed text changes, and the experience of the lead agency with review of similar legislative actions form the basis for this analysis and decision.

As noted above, all of the proposed rezones are located either within or adjacent to the existing Beacon Hill Station Area Overlay District or within areas proposed to be incorporated into the overlay district, including several existing SF5000 zones that will be rezoned to either LR3 or NC2 – 65' to align these areas with the Comprehensive Plan's Future Land Use Map. Potential impacts from the rezone proposal are analyzed below.

Short-term Impacts

As a non-project action, the proposed amendment will not have any short-term impact on the environment.

Long-term Impacts

Most long-term impacts of these proposed actions are expected to be minor. Impacts to noise, light and glare, shadows, air quality (including greenhouse gas emissions), and use of energy, natural resources, and most public services and facilities may slightly increase, due to larger structures and greater levels of activity on various sites, but are not expected to be significant. Projects developing pursuant to these proposed actions would be subject to environmental review if they meet or exceed environmental review thresholds. In addition, projects would need to comply with existing codes and regulations, including the Land Use Code, Environmentally Critical Areas regulations, and the Stormwater Code and the Grading Code

The most likely adverse impacts of the proposed actions would be to drainage; land use; height, bulk, and scale; and traffic and transportation. These topics are discussed further below:

Drainage

A review by Seattle Public Utilities staff indicates that the water, sewer and drainage utility systems are likely to be adequate to serve anticipated future demand levels. While some site-specific improvements may be needed, these improvements will be identified at the time of application for future development. New development projects in this area could be required to perform analysis of development-related impacts on utility system infrastructure and, where necessary, to construct improvements that increase capacity and avoid service degradation. New development will also be required to provide storm water control as required under the Stormwater Code.

Land Use

The Land Use SEPA policy states, in part, that "it is the City's policy to ensure that proposed uses are reasonably compatible with surrounding uses and are consistent with any applicable, adopted City land use regulations, the goals and policies set forth in Section B of the land use element of the Seattle Comprehensive Plan regarding Land Use Categories, and the shoreline goals and policies set forth in section C-4 of the land use element of the Seattle Comprehensive Plan for the area in which the project is located". In general, rezoning from Single Family to Lowrise and Neighborhood Commercial zones and increasing heights to 65' will encourage further development of the mixed use neighborhood commercial core around the Beacon Hill light rail station. The uses that would be allowed under the proposed rezones are expected to be reasonably compatible with uses in adjacent zones. No portion of the proposed rezones is within the City's Shoreline District.

The proposed rezone generally supports Comprehensive Plan goals and policies for Multifamily Residential Areas. Specifically, the proposed rezones and text amendments are proposed to facilitate the following:

- LUG11: “Encourage the development and retention of a diversity of multifamily housing types to meet the diverse needs of Seattle’s present and future populations.”
- LUG12: “Promote a residential development pattern consistent with the urban village strategy, with increased availability of housing at densities that promote walking and transit use near employment concentrations, residential services and amenities.”
- LUG15: “Provide for the concentration of housing in areas where public transit and local services are conveniently available and accessible on foot.”

The proposed rezone generally supports Comprehensive Plan goals and policies for Mixed-Use Commercial Areas. Specifically, the proposed rezones and text amendments are proposed to facilitate the following:

- LUG-17: “Create strong and successful commercial and mixed-use areas that encourage business creation, expansion and vitality by allowing for a mix of business activities, while maintaining compatibility with the neighborhood-serving character of business districts, and the character of surrounding areas.”
- LUG19: “Include housing as part of the mix of activities accommodated in commercial areas in order to provide additional opportunities for residents to live in neighborhoods where they can walk to services and employment.”
- LU116: “Seek to focus development in transit and pedestrian-friendly urban villages while maintaining compatibility between new development and the surrounding area through standards regulating the size and density of development.”
- LU117: “Generally permit a greater intensity of development in pedestrian and transit supportive environments found in pedestrian-oriented commercial areas within urban villages than is permitted in general commercial areas or outside of urban villages.”

The increased density that could result from the proposed rezones is consistent with the goals and policies cited above. The proposed rezone area is entirely within the North Beacon Hill Residential Urban Village. This area is well-served by transit, including Sound Transit’s Link Light Rail service.

Development on parcels proposed to be rezoned will be subject to design review, assuming they exceed thresholds for design review established in the Land Use Code. Design review considers the context and character of surrounding development in applying City design guidelines, thus providing an additional opportunity to address any potential incompatibilities between new development and development on adjacent parcels. It is not anticipated that the proposed text amendments will result in significant land use impacts, pursuant to SMC 25.05.675 J.

Three areas are proposed for inclusion in the Beacon Hill Station Area Overlay District. The inclusion of these areas is consistent with changes made to the City's Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map officially adopted by the City Council as part of the 2009 Comprehensive Plan annual amendment process (Ordinance 123575). The Future Land Use Map changes re-designated these areas within the North Beacon Hill Residential Urban Village from Single-Family to Multi-Family Residential or Commercial/Mixed Use, and from Multi-Family Residential to Commercial/Mixed Use. The proposed rezones for these areas are also consistent with the land use designations on the Future Land Use Map.

Height, Bulk, and Scale

In general, the height, bulk and scale of projects developed pursuant to the proposed rezones would not be substantially different than what could be built under current zoning. Areas rezoned to LR3 will be consistent with the existing 40' height limit of the neighborhood commercial core and slightly more than the lower density multifamily area under current zoning. The greatest height limits at 65', an additional 25' over the existing 40' height limit, are proposed for the existing neighborhood commercial core where higher residential and commercial density is consistent with comprehensive and neighborhood plan goals. The neighborhood core is also buffered from the surrounding single family residential areas by low and moderate density multifamily residential areas with lower heights.

Bulk and scale impacts of projects developed pursuant to the proposed rezones may also be addressed by the City's design review process. Specific height, bulk and scale impacts of proposed development will be determined at the time of project review. The proposed rezones are not expected to have a significant impact on height, bulk, and scale, pursuant to SMC 25.05.675 G.

Transportation

The proposed rezones will increase development capacity on various parcels in the affected area; projects developed pursuant to proposed rezones may generate higher volumes of traffic and have greater transportation impacts than projects proposed under the current zoning.

A traffic analysis was conducted by Fehr Peers of 2030 "No Action" conditions, representing future traffic and land use conditions under expected growth levels (without any changes to heights or densities) and 2030 "With Action" conditions, representing future traffic and land use conditions with increased employment and population resulting from increased building heights and densities, using their proprietary Mixed Use Development (MXD) trip generation tool. The MXD tool was used in conjunction with the Seattle travel model to estimate future traffic flows and level of service (LOS) at key study intersections in each of the study areas. This analysis yielded an estimated increase of 110 new PM peak-period vehicle trips in the Beacon Hill Neighborhood Planning Area by 2030 compared to No Action conditions. The analysis also yielded Level-of-Service (LOS) and Control Delay calculations for the three major intersections in the study area along Beacon Avenue S: 15th Avenue S/Beacon Avenue S, S McClellan Street/Beacon Avenue S, and S Forest Street/Beacon Avenue S.

Overall, the increased land use intensity within the neighborhood planning area results in a very small increase in delay at the two signalized study intersections (15th Avenue S and S McClellan Street). At the S Forest Street/Beacon Avenue S intersection, the analysis results show a small decrease in delay (even with higher volumes north and southbound). However, this change in traffic conditions would not generally be perceptible and overall the operations at this intersection will be the same under No Action and With Action alternatives. While LOS E operations typically constitute unacceptable performance in the City of Seattle, an impact was not defined at this location because the With Action alternative will not lead to a further degradation in traffic. In summary, the increased heights and densities within the Beacon Hill Neighborhood Planning Area are not likely to result in a significant impact to traffic operations within the study area.

Based on these studies, the availability of alternate modes, and the available arterial capacity of Beacon Avenue S, it is expected that increased heights and densities within the North Beacon Hill neighborhood core are not likely to result in a significant impact on traffic and transportation, pursuant to SMC 25.05.675 R. The transportation impacts of individual projects developing pursuant to these proposed text changes will be evaluated through SEPA review at the time of permit applications; if appropriate, mitigation will be required at that time.

On-street Parking

The proposed rezones could also result in additional demand for on-street parking spaces due to increased residential and commercial use. In March of 2011, Heffron Transportation prepared a parking monitoring program report surrounding five light rail stations including the North Beacon Hill station. Heffron surveyed the parking utilization rates within a quarter-mile and half-mile area of the light rail station during 9-11 am and 1-3 pm times on weekdays and within a quarter-mile area of the light rail station on Sundays on days with Seahawk games and days without Seahawk games. Parking utilization is defined by the number of vehicles parked as a percentage of the number of legal parking spaces. The mid-week surveys were conducted on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays in late October and early November and the Sunday surveys were conducted on Sundays in October, November, and January.

There are no minimum parking requirements in the Station Area Overlay District, therefore, the number of parking spaces provided as part of any future development would be determined by market demand. Recent development in other areas of the City suggests that developers will provide off-street parking. Additionally, the close proximity of this project to light rail may reduce car ownership rates in new development. Potential impacts would also tend to be minimized due to the Residential Parking Zone applicable to this neighborhood, which limit non-resident parking, and apply time restrictions, minimizing long-term on-street parking usage. Given existing utilization rates and area conditions, it is not anticipated that this proposal will have significant impacts on on-street parking.

Conclusion

The proposed rezones in the North Beacon Hill Residential Urban Village are not expected to have significant adverse impacts. The allowed height, bulk, and scale of development on the affected parcels are not expected to substantially increase over what is allowed by current zoning. Design review will be required of projects over the size threshold, reducing potential

height, bulk, and scale impacts. Increased trips will be accommodated by the existing arterial capacity and existing and future transit service and the mixed-use nature of the area are likely to reduce levels of auto traffic from development projects in the rezoned areas

DECISION – SEPA

This decision was made after review by the responsible official on behalf of the lead agency of a completed environmental checklist and other information on file with the responsible department. This constitutes the Threshold Determination and form. The intent of this declaration is to satisfy the requirements of the State Environmental Policy Act (RCW 43.21C), including the requirement to inform the public agency decisions pursuant to SEPA.

- [X] Determination of Non-Significance. This proposal has been determined to not have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is not required under RCW 43.21C.030 2c.
- [] Determination of Significance. This proposal has or may have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is required under RCW 43.21C.030 2c.

RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS – SEPA

None.

Signature: (signature on file)
William K. Mills, Senior Land Use Planner
Department of Planning and Development
Land Use Services

Date: October 6, 2011